

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 19 and 20, claims 14, 15, 21, 22, and 25 to 27 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter included in claims 20 to 22. In this regard, the Examiner will note that claim 14 has been amended herein without prejudice to include the features included in claim 20 as well as the features included in intervening claim 19. Claim 21 has been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 14. Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14, 21, and 22 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Since claims 15 and 25 to 27 ultimately depend from claim 14, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are also in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejections Raised Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

Regarding the rejections raised under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a), although the merits of these rejections are not necessarily agreed with, as indicated above, claim 14 has been amended herein without prejudice to include the features of claims 19 and 20. Since claim 20 was indicated to include allowable subject matter, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claim 14 render moot the rejections raised under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a). Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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